

## CLAIMS

- 5 *SUB B5*
1. A method of notifying a user of the receipt of an e-mail by a mail centre, comprising transmitting a notification message in a broadcast signal.
2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the notification message is sent without any (direct) user prompt.
- 10 *SUB A1*
3. A method according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the notification message includes an identifier of a receiver/decoder to which the notification message is to be sent.
- 15 *SUB B5*
4. A method according to claim 3 wherein the receiver/decoder compares the identifier with an identifier which is stored at the receiver/decoder.
- 20 *SUB A2*
5. A method according to claim 3 or 4 wherein the receiver/decoder has a smartcard number and the identifier comprises at least part of the smartcard number.
- 25 *SUB B5*
6. A method according to any of the preceding claims further comprising storing information relating to e-mail accounts, preferably at a central location.
- 30 *SUB A3*
7. A method according to claim 6 wherein information relating to e-mail accounts is linked to identifiers of receiver/decoders, and preferably wherein the information relating to e-mail accounts is linked to the smartcard numbers of receiver/decoders.
8. A method according to claim 6 or 7 wherein the broadcast signal is part of a subscription service and information relating to e-mail accounts is linked to information relating to the subscription service.
9. A method according to any of the preceding claims wherein the notification message comprises an identifier of the recipient of the e-mail.

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10. A method according to any of the preceding claims wherein the notification message comprises an identifier of the sender of the e-mail.

11. A method according to any of the preceding claims wherein the notification message comprises at least part of the text of the e-mail.

12. A method according to any of the preceding claims wherein the notification message is sent to a receiver/decoder.

13. A method according to claim 12 wherein the receiver/decoder generates a signal for indicating to the user receipt of the e-mail by the mail centre.

14. A method according to any of the preceding claims further comprising storing preferences selected by the user.

15. A method according to any of the preceding claims further comprising notifying the user of a selected number of e-mails.

16. A method according to any of the preceding claims wherein the broadcast signal is a digital data stream.

17. A method according to claim 16 wherein the notification message is sent as a section of the digital data stream.

18. A method according to claim 16 wherein the notification message is sent by way of an entitlement management message.

19. A method of notifying a user of the receipt of e-mail by a mail centre, which e-mail is to be transmitted to the user via a first medium, comprising transmitting a notification message, indicating the receipt of e-mail by the mail centre, to the user via a second medium, different from the first medium.

20. A method according to claim 19 wherein the first medium is a switched

SUB  
A3

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SUB  
B5

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SUB  
B4

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SUB  
B5

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medium and the second medium is a broadcast medium.

21. A method according to any of the preceding claims further comprising transmitting at least part of the e-mail in the broadcast signal.

22. A method of transferring an e-mail from a mail centre to a user, comprising transmitting at least part of the e-mail in a broadcast signal.

23. A method of communicating with a mail centre, comprising running an e-mail application on a receiver/decoder.

24. Apparatus for notifying a user of the receipt of e-mail by a mail centre, comprising means for transmitting a notification message in a broadcast signal.

25. Apparatus according to claim 24 wherein the notification message includes an identifier of a receiver/decoder to which the notification message is to be sent.

26. Apparatus according to claims 24 or 25 further comprising means for storing information relating to e-mail accounts.

27. Apparatus according to claim 26 wherein information relating to e-mail accounts is linked to identifiers of receiver/decoders, and preferably wherein the information relating to e-mail accounts is linked to the smartcard numbers of receiver/decoders.

28. Apparatus according to claim 26 or 27 wherein the broadcast signal is part of a subscription service and information relating to e-mail accounts is linked to information relating to the subscription service.

29. Apparatus according to any of claims 24 to 28 wherein the notification message comprises an identifier of the recipient of the e-mail.

30. Apparatus according to any of claims 24 to 29 wherein the notification message comprises an identifier of the sender of the e-mail.

31. Apparatus according to any of claims 24 to 30 wherein the notification  
5 message comprises at least part of the text of the e-mail.

32. Apparatus according to any of claims 24 to 31 further comprising means for storing preferences selected by the user.

10            33. Apparatus according to any of claims 24 to 32 wherein the apparatus is adapted to notify the user of a selected number of e-mails.

34. Apparatus according to any of claims 24 to 33 wherein the broadcast signal is a digital data stream.

35. Apparatus according to claim 34 wherein the apparatus is adapted to send the notification/message as a section of the digital data stream.

36. Apparatus according to claim 34 wherein the apparatus is adapted to  
20 send the notification message by way of an entitlement management message.

37. Apparatus according to any of claim 24 to 36 wherein the apparatus is adapted to send at least part of the e-mail in the broadcast signal.

25            38.    Apparatus for transferring an e-mail from a mail centre to a user,  
                 comprising means for transmitting at least part of the e-mail in a broadcast signal.

39. Apparatus for notifying a user of the receipt of e-mail by a mail centre, which e-mail is to be transmitted to the user via a first medium, comprising means for transmitting a notification message, indicating the receipt of e-mail by the mail centre, to the user via a second medium, different from the first medium.

40. Apparatus according to claim 39 wherein the first medium is a switched

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medium and the second medium is a broadcast medium.

5 41. A receiver/decoder for receiving and/or decoding a broadcast signal, comprising means for receiving, together with a broadcast signal, a notification message for notifying a user of the receipt of e-mail by a mail centre.

10 42. A receiver/decoder according to claim 41 wherein the receiver/decoder is adapted to compare an identifier in the notification message with an identifier which is stored at the receiver/decoder.

15 43. A receiver/decoder according to claim 41 or 42 wherein the receiver/decoder has a smartcard number and the identifier comprises at least part of the smartcard number.

20 44. A receiver/decoder according to any of claims 41 to 43 wherein the receiver/decoder generates a signal indicating the receipt of e-mail by the mail centre.

25 45. A receiver/decoder according to any of claims 41 to 44 wherein the receiver/decoder generates a signal for displaying at least part of the notification message.

46. A receiver/decoder for receiving and/or decoding a broadcast signal, comprising means for receiving e-mail via a first medium and means for receiving a notification message, indicating the receipt of e-mail by the mail centre, via a second medium different from the first medium.

47. A receiver/decoder according to claim 46 wherein the first medium is a switched medium and the second medium is a broadcast medium.

30 48. System for notifying a user of the receipt of e-mail comprising apparatus according to any of claims 24 to 40 and a receiver/decoder according to any of claims 41 to 47.

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49. A method substantially as described herein with reference to Figures 1-7 of the accompanying drawings.

50. Apparatus substantially as described herein with reference to and as  
5 illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

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